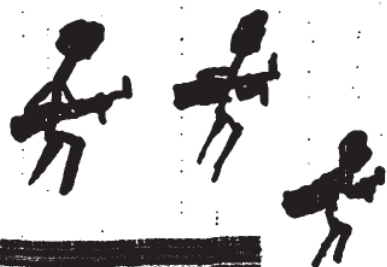




Goa Whiz

Pretty pretty boy
pretty pretty boy

Onward to
Mannagva



THE COUNTERFORCE

Issue #11 – May 2026

hardcore punk underground



INSIDE: PUNKS ON THE FEDIVERSE
HOW TO MAKE A SHOW POSTER
REVIEWS • COLUMNS • CROSSWORD

What is this? **The Counterforce** is an initiative to push back against the corporate capture of hardcore punk. Social media apps and streaming platforms dominate how we interact online, including how we share and distribute our music and ideas. The corporations that run these platforms extract massive profits from us, which they use to fund and facilitate exploitation, war, and genocide. Meanwhile, our independent and underground alternatives have eroded.

The goal of The Counterforce is to strengthen and grow the hardcore punk underground that still exists outside of this corporate capture. Rather than funnel punk into profit-driven walled gardens, we want to foment and encourage a culture that is autonomous and independent. This is not just a nostalgic, backward-facing project—we want to explore new alternatives for spreading hardcore punk online and offline.

You are reading issue #11 of the print version of The Counterforce.

Find the files to print and distribute this zine (and others like it) yourself online at <https://the-counterforce.org>

There, you will also find the other arms of The Counterforce:

A WEB ZINE

This site publishes reviews, letters, scene reports, profiles/interviews, rants, and how-to guides, all with an emphasis on projects that try to exist outside of corporate platforms.

In part, we hope this will encourage human-driven curation, recommendation, and discovery. Find out about new bands that aren't on the streaming sites. Submit a review of your own band. Compile a scene report or show review and send it in. We also publish articles and DIY how-to guides to help empower other punks to build and participate in a scene that's less centered around evil apps.

All this is published online, but also compiled into regular print zine editions to bring paper back to the punk show (like the version you are reading now).

A DIRECTORY OF SIMILARLY ALIGNED PROJECTS

The Internet is breaking down. Websites outside of a handful of apps have slowly disappeared, and the ones that are still out there are harder and harder to find.

The Counterforce provides a directory of these websites: blogs, archives, distros, zines, radio shows and podcasts... anywhere hardcore punk can be found online (and maybe offline too!).

A PLACE TO EXPERIMENT WITH AND LEARN ABOUT ALTERNATIVES

It's easy to shit on the corporate social media and streaming platforms, but what other options are there? There are alternatives and we try them out—public online show calendars, open-source social media, self-hosted music sharing—and encourage other punks to join us.



THE COUNTERFORCE IS A DISTRIBUTED AND COMMUNITY PROJECT

Find everything online at: the-counterforce.org

CONTACT

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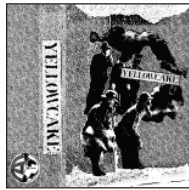
If sending us something other than a letter (like a record/tape for review) from **outside Canada** you must **indicate it has a declared value under \$20**. Otherwise, Canada will apply duties and taxes which we cannot afford to pay!

PRINT THIS ZINE

This zine is available on our website as a PDF you can print out and distribute yourself, with more coming soon.

their interest in dirty music, New Thenners hopelessly trying to replicate the effortless cool of this UHF transmission, but you should try not to miss out on it Now.

— Ralph Rivera



YELLOWCAKE – Apparitions of War CS

If it seems like I disproportionately dunk on d-beat, consider for a sec that so much of it is inspired,

unlistenable dogshit. Backwards looking, self-indulgent pastiche overly indebted to this or that country's scene from 20 or 30 years before any member was even born, lamenting the wars that filled their parents' bank accounts and paid for all the cider, studs, and hairspray they could ever ask for. Maybe maybe maybe... maybe I DO believe the many offenders should be locked in a gulag and forced to listen to Peter, Paul, and/or Mary 22hrs a day (I'm no monster), 7 days a week for their crimes against music and, once freed, a crossed out 8th note branded on their pointy little heads.

I say these things, and then I hear BLACK DOG or NO KNOCK or, of course, Arizona's YELLOWCAKE and consider the possibility that I've judged too harshly. Perhaps even I may be wrong from time to time (though, as Nevada may attest after the unrelenting punishment they received by yours truly this past weekend, if once informed, you find your way back to rightness, were you ever truly wrong? A Thought for another time, perhaps).

Just as evil as BLACK DOG, though a little more chaotic. The riffs rip through the speakers with 1,000,000mph (1,609,344km/h for most of yuz) rapid-fire downstroke madness, only diverting now and again to indulge in some lead-guitar wankery. The tom-heavy caveman drums punctuated by big fucking fills at the end of nearly measure evoke an infinity of fists punching unlimited low-clearance basements. And goddamnn, Genesis' vocals are perfect, calling to mind the best moments of QUESTION/DETESTATION's Saira. Primal grunts and screams and shouts. Nothing breaks the 2min mark, as almost nothing should.

An almost perfect release from the CAKEsters and their label Total Peace, willfully marred by the exclusion of a fucking lyrics sheet.

—Ralph Rivera

A DIGITAL ZINE DISTRO

Major punk fanzines of the past fell victim to the rising costs of printing and shipping. We publish printable PDFs of our zines online for anyone to print and distribute themselves, and encourage other zinesters to submit their own.

What if instead of shipping zines around the world, any punk anywhere could log on, download some PDFs and scam some copies to have a fully stocked, PWYC zine distro at the next show? Print-It-Yourself!

A HARD LINE AGAINST CONTRIBUTING TO FURTHER CORPORATE CAPTURE OF OUR SUBCULTURE

- No links to Instagram, Spotify, Linktree, Discord, or other corporate platforms.
- No coverage of releases that are on major labels, or only available digitally on corporate streaming platforms.
- Always independent and not-for-profit.

For expanding the hardcore punk mutual aid autonomous zone.

For facilitating human curation and recommendation.

For hardcore punk with context and politics.

Against celebrity, ladder climbers, clout chasers and influencers.

Against the algorithmic flattening of our subculture.

Against the capitalist death machine and the corporate capture of hardcore punk.

Contributors to this issue: Crash JT, Felix L.G., Greg the Builder, Grego Clow, Hampton/Earth Girl Tapes, Martin Force, Slim, Ralph Rivera, and Taylor Joy.
Cover by Ralph Rivera. Layout by Taylor Joy.

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Punks on the Fediverse

by Martin Force

We invest too much of our culture in centralized, for-profit, corporate social media platforms. These platforms enrich billionaires, expand surveillance, and fund the cult of capitalist war, all while trapping us with addictive algorithms that feed us mindless content. It feels necessary to be on these platforms to “stay connected”, yet paradoxically they increase our isolation. Their purpose is to extract profit, not to help us connect.



Depending on where you are in the world, Meta's Instagram, Facebook, or WhatsApp may be the preferred social media for punks. Or it may be Telegram or Twitter or Discord.

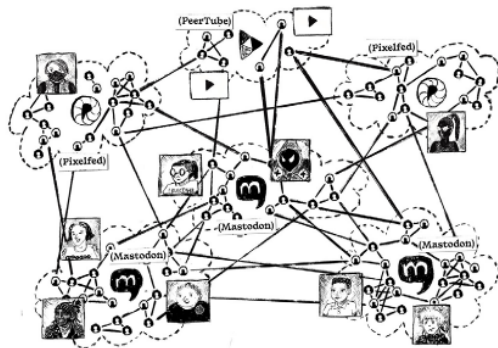
As the evils of a given corporate platform become more and more apparent, punks have a tendency to jump to another app en masse. We don't want to see another jump from one billionaire-investor-owned centralized corporate platform to another.

Meta, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, Twitter, Telegram, Discord, Substack, Google's You-

Tube, Reddit, and even Bluesky – these corporate platforms are all built on the same twisted dream of monopolizing our attention to extract profit. There is nothing truly liberatory, DIY, or punk about any of them.

THE FEDIVERSE **

Instead of jumping between online capitalist corporate platforms, we propose a radical alternative that's actually aligned with punk values: the **Fediverse**, a network for open, autonomous, decentralized, not-for-profit, and DIY social media.



album is. I don't know how much more I can say about it. Look, you get it. If you're into the first edition D&D aesthetic, the midtempo metalpunk tunes, and have been into the singles and the first two LPs, then you will dig this. That said, if you've missed out till now for whatever reason, there's no better place to start than here. Opening track “Lily of the valley” has been on constant repeat for me – I challenge you not to raise your chain-mail-gloved fist to the sky and sing along. “Guts (Lay Your Self Aside)” includes a cheeky nod to the 1997 anime adaptation of every punk's favourite manga, *Berserk*. I could mention the JUDAS PRIEST inflected riffs on “Eidolon” or the early black metal stylings of the album's last two tracks. I could argue that “Howls From The Citadel” is POISON RUIN fully realizing their dungeon synth side quests. But all of these references and influences would fall flat if they're not combined in a way that is emotionally satisfying! Dear reader, I was not a fan of Harvest, and was lukewarm on Confrere, so I was a little worried how this LP might turn out! Ultimately it is the sense of mystery and wonder that this album conjures that keeps me listening again and again. It reminds me of being sixteen with a “Number Of The Beast” back patch and being a total chucklehead. It reminds me of being twenty and stoned, listening to HAWKWIND's Space Ritual and being a complete numbskull. This album makes me excited to be alive. Enjoy the mystery. Enjoy POISON RUIN.

FFO: PAUL DI'ANNO ERA MAIDEN, KENTARO MIURA, HAWKWIND

Released by Relapse Records

—Felix L.G.



REHASH NEU KLANG – War Crimes & Love Songs EP

Antwerp ensemble brings a heavy dose of post-punk on this release. An equal balance

of catchy, dancey, and angular. I typically go for a little rawer production for my post-punk, but THE STROKES fan in me can dig it. I hate to rag on people who are clearly great players, but the drums get a little same-y and there is something about how the hi hat sounds in

the first track that kind of gets on my nerves. At first, I was confused by some of the GANG OF FOUR comparisons I kept seeing but some of the dubbier parts in the middle bring it out. Older band ABWÄRTS and 2010's band NEGATIVE SCANNER also come to mind. Seems to be some fun little studio tricks sprinkled in there as well, but I ain't no expert on the matter. I don't see myself playing this too often, but I would definitely recommend this to someone who gave 154 an honest listen but just couldn't quite hang.

—Grego Clow



SLIT – Demo 2025 CS

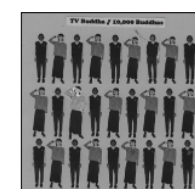
Once every ten years or so, I find it acceptable for a hardcore punk band to release a song over 1.5 mins.

Not, I should say, out of some hivemind adherence to tradition, but because most of you me us chuckleheads just cannot fucking write something worth paying attention to for that long.

SLIT did it twice on their two song tape. Maybe a larger sample size will some day reveal this tape naught but a fluke, but for now, their record stands unblemished. Big, heavy, chunky (pretty?), Ebullition meets Pusmort meets Vermiform meets four alarm fire. All knuckles on the floor, all feet flying, all heads kicked in.

Bonus points for writing something on the tape and including a fucking lyrics sheet.

—Ralph Rivera



TV BUDDHA – 10,000 Buddhas CS

Punk like NYC '69 or NYC '72 or NYC '76 or like... Chicago, circa right now. One shudders to think what the first 9,999 Buddhas

must have endured to reach this one, but their sacrifice was worth it. Free Punk, Free Mod, Freek Beat, Free Youths.

In 15 minutes, in 15 days, in 15 years, there'll be a bunch of bands comprised of 30-some-things doing interviews in digital magazines that'll cite this release as the zero-point of



HIGH IDEALS – High Ideals CS

Skull face peace sign loud speakers feel like ingredients in a specific recipe but you'd be surprised at

whatcha pull out the oven with this one. More "Boston Suburbs MIDDLE CLASS" than "Distortion Til Deafness" here, which I've been told quite a few times is "Ralphcore" but my excitement started to plateau around the 15th lap. They have high ideals and no regrets and are ignorant and you know this because the song titles are the choruses and the choruses get repeated four times, four times each song.

Over and done without much ado, but there's enough youthful quirks, fits, and starts peppered throughout to reignite the futuresight. The throbbin' in my noggin: they record a 9 song MLP before they break up. Forecast unclear whether it sounds like the CULO 7 inches (great!) or the CULO LP (wretched). Don't let us down!

—Ralph Rivera

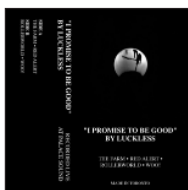


HAVANA SYNDROME – Tour Tape

Freaky and fast hardcore punk straight outta Buffalo, NY.

Saying this is a synth punk band feels wrong, just a ripping punk band that also has a synth, ya know? As far as I can tell this tape is a tour exclusive. Two/three new tracks and 4 tracks from their Dog City Sessions video. The new tracks are easily the best recordings of this band so far. At times reminds me of a scrappier and faster more punk version of the band LEATHER from Philadelphia. Some slick guitar rocking combined with some synth styles, winning combo here. Screaming about computers and AI and the eyes on you. Full disclosure I recorded the final 4 tracks so I think they rock obviously. Watch the video for yourself if think journalism is truly dead. For fans of driving a sick motorcycle through the digital mainframe of Neo-Buffalo.

—Hampton / Earth Girl Tapes



LUCKLESS – I Promise To Be Good

We received this tape in the mail, and I looked at the return address and it's some street in DC and says

1986 A.D. for some reason... I'm joking, but this band is definitely working off a heavy RITES OF SPRING era Discord influence, moreso on the songs I enjoyed the most. They don't quite hit that Revolution Summer mark, but I don't really know if anyone really can. That being said, this short debut EP incorporates synth to that kind of sound which is a nice iteration I haven't heard before. Turn up the synth in the mix on the next release though! If you are heavily into Revolution Summer type stuff, I would suggest you get this and keep an eye on this band. Also I have to mention that they have a simple band website: <https://luckless.neocities.org/>.

—Martin Force



MASS HALLUCINATION – Self Titled CS

This is a quick 3-song tape from Leeds' MASS HALLUCINATION. Raw angry hardcore punk. Pretty raw, pretty

noisy. The vocals remind me of someone else, but I can't quite put my finger on it. But the vocalist isn't just "doing a voice" like so many bands, they are clearly pushing it and letting their voice go in all sorts of directions (in a way that isn't contrived). I like it, but it's short and I'd have to see this band live to really decide if I'm sold or not. Hopefully this is a prelude to a longer follow-up and/or some touring!

Released by Makeshift Swahili

—Martin Force



POISON RUIN – Hymns From The Hills

There has been so much talk in my immediate circles about how good this

The Fediverse is an interconnected network of social media platforms that are:

- Inherently anti-corporate (it's built by autonomous individuals, collectives, non-profits, open-source weirdos and it can't be owned by any person or company)
- DIY (anyone can host a server or build a part of the network).
- Won't keep leaving us (we can invest in something we build for ourselves).
- A healthier scroll (no profit motive = no addictive doomscroll).
- Not a walled garden (you don't need to sign up and sell out to stay connected).

MORE THAN MASTODON

Mastodon is just one platform that makes up the Fediverse. Superficially, it's social media akin to Twitter or Tumblr. You see a feed of posts from accounts you follow. You can like, boost (re-post) or reply to other posts. You can make your own posts with images, text and links, and you can tag other users. For the most part, there are no ads and there's no algorithm. Rather than being fed an endless scroll of suggested content, what you see in your timeline is determined entirely by what you choose to follow.

But, there is more to the Fediverse than just Mastodon. There are hundreds of different platforms making up the Fediverse. Each one might have a few or many servers, but not many have punk servers (...yet).

So, Mastodon is a good place to start, but it might not actually be for you. If you want to run a video channel, PeerTube is better. If you are a photographer you might want to create a Pixelfed account. Remember that all these platforms and their respective servers are interconnected. Your friends on a Mastodon server can still follow your account on one of these other platforms (and often vice versa).



Here are just a few other platforms that make up the Fediverse besides Mastodon, PeerTube and Pixelfed:

- **Bandwagon.fm** (like Bandcamp... follow a band)
- **Gancio** (powers all the Ask A Punk calendars!)
- **Bookwyrms** (for tracking reading and sharing book recommendations like Goodreads)
- **Lemmy** (like Reddit)
- **neodb** (review and catalog your records, books or anything else)

OUR EXPERIENCES WITH THE FEDIVERSE

We know this can work. We've been running a Fediverse-connected punk show calendar (montreal.askapunk.net) and Mastodon server (438punk.house) for punks in Montreal since 2021. As it's slowly grown, it's given a lot of punks here an off-ramp to ditch Instagram. We've created a place where local punks can share upcoming shows, announce new releases, make new friends, and start bands – without needing to rely on a platform like Instagram.

It's more than just us on there! We are connected to other punks worldwide, thanks to the Fediverse. And it's not just a few constellations of punks. The Fediverse attracts a lot of punk-adjacent communities because of the values it embodies. There are a lot of anarchists and other leftists, queer and trans people, off-grid weirdos, artists, archivists, radio enthusiasts, urban explorers — anyone who's escaped from corporate social media but still sees some value in connecting with others online.

TRY THE FEDIVERSE

First up, read our *Guide to Mastodon and The Fediverse (for punks)* you can read it online here: <https://the-counterforce.org/guide-to-mastodon-fediverse/> or it was probably available as a zine wherever you picked this up!

That *Guide* explains in more detail what the Fediverse is, how it works, what makes it useful punks, and walks you through signing up for a Mastodon account. We put a lot of work into that how-to and it's really good!

Once you've read that, create an account for yourself. Or for your band, your distro, your label, your fest, your show booking collective, your zine, your show photography... whatever you are currently sharing on social media. Bring it to the open Fediverse so other punks don't need to sell out and sign up for corporate social media to see it!

Accompanying our *Guide to Mastodon and The Fediverse (for punks)* is **counterforce.social** — a Mastodon server for punks curious about Mastodon and the Fediverse, as well as regular contributors, distros, other zines and similar Counterforce-aligned projects.



DITCHING CORPORATE SOCIAL MEDIA

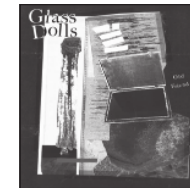
You don't have to make a grand gesture and delete your Instagram account or shut down your Discord. I mean, you could. That would be really cool!

But you don't have to go cold turkey. Radical change is hard. Give the Fediverse an honest try. You can still keep your Instagram account, but maybe in a month or two you'll realize you don't need it anymore? 🍷

Stop doing that. BLACK FLAG had 13 singers, I'm sure you can figure it out.

Like their last release, I don't at all see the CRUCIFUCKS comparisons that Big Punk is pedaling, but the URTICARIA label lands a bit closer to the mark with an ABURADA-KO reference. I definitely see a bit of fellow Irishers ANXIETY's DNA got spurted into the pot, so much so I had to check for members in common, but all this is to say "FFO: shit that doesn't suck."

—Ralph Rivera



GLASS DOLLS – Old Friend

GLASS DOLLS is the project of my TOTAL NADA bandmate Etienne, who also plays in WAYS OF HIDING, RECALL, and likely filled in on drums or guitar in the last band you saw... Last year he started playing shows with a backing band of friends and released the debut GLASS DOLLS EP. At the time I was bit disappointed – not because the EP was bad, but because all the songs I had gotten to know from the live shows were missing! The EP seems to be a collection of songs that predated the live show. *Old Friend* is a full LP, comprising those live songs and several more. A lot of work went into these songs, and it shows.

While the 2025 EP leans bit more indie-rock, *Old Friend* straddles stripped-down postpunk and melancholic lo-fi synth pop. Overall this is a sad record, and not in the gloomy gothic vampire-vocals way. Just earnest genuine emotion. I might caution you before listening to it if you are already feeling down. But after only one listen you will surely have the guitar lead from "Echoes", the bassline from "Black Cloud", or a fragment of lyrics stuck in your head which somehow won't feel so sad.

Currently this is just a tape available in person, but I wouldn't be surprised if you see this released on vinyl later this year.

—Martin Force



HAPPY FARM – Happy Farm CS

Expect this clarification included any time I have the release in hand: no fucking lyrics sheet. That's sort of expect at this point,

but Jesus fucking Christ.

Independent of that, I've gone back and forth trying to figure out how much I enjoy this or whether I did at all period. Whatever hesitation I felt in giving a full-throated endorsement dissipated after about 30 listens: I have decided that you and I both belong on the Arizona HAPPY FARM.

This art is fucking awesome. It looks like something you would have only discovered 15 years after its original release during the blogcore era of the late aughts/early teens. If I saw this in the racks at any age, I would have stopped looking. Journey over, tinnitus imminent. Good job, Joseph the artist, it's a shame no one asked you to lay out a lyric sheet.

As for the band itself, which does not include Joseph, you also did a good job! I always love when the drummer throws in a fill at every possible opportunity, I always love when the feedback shrieks and howls, and I always love when a band throws in a little tasteful palm muting whether or not it's congruent with the behavior of one's peers. I've always judged vocalists most harshly, but HF's clears, sacrificing themselves over the course of 7 tracks and sending the recordings back in time to haunt the tape like a fucking ghoul. The delivery sounds like the corners of your mouth pulling away from the center of your face and every vein in your neck one second from bursting.

What thoughts and ideas I can make out seem earnest and uncompromising. It's a shame that there's no lyrics sheet I can use to confirm this, because I believe most of us would receive no small benefit by seeing ourselves reflected in the words of a band who champions the "survival of few against the apathy of most."

End diatribe.

—Ralph Rivera

SUBMIT PHYSICAL RELEASES FOR REVIEW BY MAIL:

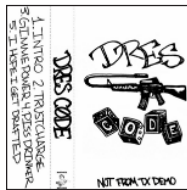
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core: young, alive, and a lot more hopeful. One of the best of the year for sure.

FFO: hardcore punk, punk hardcore, straight-edge, self-empowerment and unity.

Released by Designated Moshers Unit
—Greg The Builder



DRES CODE – Not From TX Demo

First thing. Yes, the band name is spelled correctly. DRES. Next, the name of the tape. There was a band from Houston, TX

called DRESS CODE, not active since 2015 it seems. The tape named as such to help those who are confused I guess. This band is out of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. A scene that is demanding to be seen and quickly gaining momentum over the past few years as a freak punk hot spot. There's a joyfulness and almost fun vibe to DRES CODE. It's hardcore punk make no mistake. The vocals are what really makes this release for me. Very forward in the mix, bright, nothing gruff, just punks shouting. Shared vocals duties between the guitar and bass player. Take any BLATZ recording and put these vocals over it and it just works. I love 'em. Gang vocal shouting the phrase "FUCK YOU" in the last track. It's just plain fun hardcore punk. This band is a three piece. Rare for music like this. Another factor that makes this band stick out in my mind to me. This the best of Murfreesboro. No lyrics sheet. Shame, so close to true greatness on this one. Absolutely worth a listen still.

Available from Ragdoll Records (US) and Noise Merchant Records (UK)

—Hampton / Earth Girl Tapes



FATAL PEACE – 2026 Demo CS

I, perhaps unfairly, made a knee-jerk assumption, based off the rather zeitgeist-y, UA Fest friendly bad name and bad,

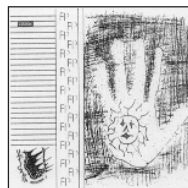
uninspired cover art that that the first foray of MPLS' FATAL PEACE would, frankly, suck. I let it languish in "to listen to" purgatory for a few weeks before giving Peace a chance, and lemme tell ya True Believer, this would give yer fave Beatle tinnitus (though, if yer fave mop top is John, you should take a good long look inside yerself).

The vocals are ugly and sit just right in the mix, thankfully resisting any contemporaneous inclinations to hide like a coward under mommy's blankie, layered under endless reverb. Just the classic "rabid dog hardcore" type shit we know and love.

Their five originals call to mind Michigan's BORN WITHOUT A FACE: mean, driving, metal-tinged hardcore punk. They even make a golden oldie unrecognizable a la the aforementioned.

Rating? 0 barks, 5 bites. (That's good! Ya know the adage, si?)

—Ralph Rivera



FLOWER POWER – Raw Power CS

Another six song, 8ish minute fuckin' psycho hardcore banger for this month's assembled readership. And, like AG-3, another

band I'm glad didn't break up because their bassist moved a town away or some bullshit.

How to make a show poster

by Taylor Joy

If a flyer was only posted on Instagram, did the show even happen?

Physical media has always been important to punk and DIY. Tapes, records and zines are the first things to come to mind, but flyers and posters are just as important. At our house there are posters from meaningful shows and tours past hanging on the walls, and even hundreds of flyers bursting out of the archives.

You're organizing a punk show. Great! The purpose of this how-to is to stress the importance of doing physical promotion, and show you how to do it right — whether flyers (aka handbills, small paper you can hand out) or posters (larger papers you can staple/tape/wheatpaste up around town). I'll mostly talk about posters in this guide, but at the end I'll give some tips about how to shrink your posters down into handbill size to make them easier to copy and hand out.

A show poster is an advertisement. It should 1. entice people to come to the show, and 2. give them all the info they need to do so. Think about the person you would want to come to the show who wouldn't necessarily come by default — your flyer or poster should be trying to sell the show to this person.

IF: your flyer looks cool but has scant information about the bands, time and location, and is only posted on Instagram, your show is going to be attended by the people who already know the drill. Your shows will get smaller and smaller as less and less new blood turns up.

IF: your flyer has detailed information about what the music is gonna be like, and what's gonna happen where and at what time, more people who are on the fence will feel empowered to come.

A note about gatekeeping: People who care about punk and know where to look — whether at posters around town, on websites they don't have to log into our use an app to access, in show listing newsletters, or being handed a flyer at a different show — SHOULD be able to find out about your show. If your flyer looks punk and has info that punks or punk-curious people can decipher, normies will simply not see it. Your show shouldn't be "gatekept" from people who don't wanna use Instagram (If you need more convincing about this, you should probably reread the manifesto.) I live in a pretty big city with lots of punks, lots of shows and lots of infrastructure for promoting shows outside of corporate platforms, and STILL once a month or so I find out about a show too late that I would have wanted to go to but didn't see because it was only promoted on platforms I don't use and can't access. It's unacceptable!

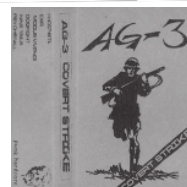
MAKING THE POSTER

Think of the artwork and design of your poster as one among many important pieces of info. Just like album artwork, it's meant to give people an idea of the vibe of the show. But it doesn't matter if you paid too much money for some siiiiick art from the most hype punk illustrator, if your poster doesn't have actual info that people need to know how, where, and when to see the show it's totally useless!

Before you start making a poster (or sending out the info to an artist), first compile all the information that should go on the poster. **Check that you are not missing anything, and that all of the information is accurate. Run it by the bands playing or anyone helping you with the show.** You don't want to have to get someone to redraw everything because you made a typo in a band name.



REVIEWS



AG-3 – Covert Strike CS

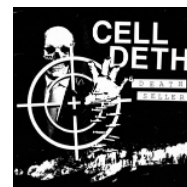
Another flawless demonstration of punk hardcore from Norway's naztiest export, the proud declaration thereof adorning the

back flap o' the j-card almost brings a tear to my eye. Mass proliferation! May no ears be left unscathed!

My review of their prior outing read simply "fuck" with like 38 Ks, and that feels similarly pertinent here. Sure, they made us wait two years for like 8 minutes of music, but get to do that when you actually, eventually make good. The bass is a little bouncier, vocals a bit more strained, and it never feels more concerned with spotify playlist inclusion than being absolutely unhinged. "Dogfight" is the clear standout here, blasting the fuck off from the zero point zero zero scream and stick click intro and careening into the last terrifying seconds with, what sounds to these ears, like a murderous mantra of "I'm killing you."

A perfect 6 outta 5.

—Ralph Rivera



CELL DETH – Death Seller 7"

Death Seller hits the ground sprinting and barely lets up over ten tracks of tight, noisy, blisteringly fast hardcore punk. I've

been waiting for this record since I visited PEI on tour last spring and ran into CELL DETH on their way into the studio to record, fresh off performing these songs the night before (I moshed). Now that it's finally out I am NOT disappointed. Buzzy, evil-sounding feedback heralds each song, replete with sufficiently catchy riffs and straight-shooting lyrics that tackle classic themes like the misery of life under the boot of capitalism, as well as more timely crises such as overdose deaths,

attacks on bodily autonomy and Israel's genocide of Palestinians. Story's vocals are a real standout for me – it takes a crazy amount of power and control to make vocals in the highest ranges sound harsh and big, and they totally nail it here. At times it feels like everything is nearly flying off the rails and pulling itself back together just in time to hit a mid-tempo moment or a whisper of a breakdown (nothing wanky though – the closest you'll get to indulgence here is a sprinkling of guitar noodles). The members of CELL DETH are connoisseurs and stewards of hardcore punk in their small scene, and while there are a lot of familiar building blocks in play, they've expertly assembled the pieces together in a way that kept me on my toes, even through multiple listens. You may occasionally get the sense that things are spinning out of control, but don't worry – Dad's driving the minivan and you're (probably) perfectly safe in the backseat. Enjoy the ride.

Released by Broken Skull Records

—Taylor Joy



DEMONSTRATE – Prove Me Wrong

Clocking in just over 5 1/2 minutes, this record gives you everything you need and nothing you don't. Fast parts, groove parts, well

placed mosh parts, and most importantly parts to actually two-step to. I find a lot of current bands emulating 80's hardcore tend to sound more like bands influenced by the era than the original bands themselves. The songs on *Prove Me Wrong* sound like they were written by hardcore historians. On DEMONSTRATE's Bandcamp, notable fellow Philadelphian, Dan Yemen, really drives home the point when he commented "Sounds like actual 1987. Not a bunch of jocks trying to sound like 1987. Actual time travel". I'll defer to Dan's lived experience there since that was the year I was born, but I will say this record made me feel like the first time I heard hard-



Singalong Song

When's the last time you saw a room full of people singing a song that wasn't a hit on the radio at one point or another?

Growing up in St John's, Newfoundland, one song stuck out for many years, most importantly for its story: "Dry Show" by CONDITION-ER.

The band's member have served in different punk projects over the years like BAD PLAN, YEE GIRLS and PILLOWCOUNT. It's not a punk song, it's a song about punk. The story describes the atmosphere of St John's shows at one time.

I didn't know it was a true story till I joked to the singer about the starting lyrics, asking "so who punched you in the face?" That's when the story found me. It's a small enough town that I think he even pointed to the person at that show.

After talking to another friend about my newfound knowledge, he told me excitedly that he was in fact one of the kids described in the song who the singer had stuck up for.

Sometimes you steal someone's beer, tag the wrong shit or break a rule. We take it, dish it out and learn along the way. You never know when that stupid kid from the gig might act a bit smarter and become a lifelong friend. This song embodies that feeling of waking away in defeat (yet with a smile) after breaking some rules.

I hope this song does not get forgotten. There's a great live session version on the *Lost Opus* YouTube channel that I recommend.



The lyrics as listed on bandcamp:

*I was punched in the face by an aging punk
outside of a house show a few years back.
I recall that.
I guess I shouldn't have said anything in
defense of those kids.
Their only crime
was doing cocaine with the sketchy dude you
invited but who invited you?
You stood outside gatekeeping with an open
beer, arms folded you wore a sneer. They
were nothing like what you lost.*

*When you really get a taste for it, it really
sucks you in.
They want to be your friend.
You want to run away.
Makes you want to walk home*

—Slim

1) Date: Day of Week, Date, Month. These are all essential. But don't forget the oft-overlooked YEAR!!! If you take one thing away from this guide, **put the year of the show on your posters.** You might not think this is important, but it is. If your poster (or the show) was good, it will end up as wallpaper in some punk house bathroom and hoarded in flyer archives for years to come. Including the year is especially important in this digital age, where images are often shared online out of context.

2) Location: how much info you include for the location can depend on your city and the show. If you're in a smaller place with only a few regular show joints in town and they're easily searchable, you can probably forego the address. If you're in a bigger city with a lot of venues, you might want to include the address or transit stop to give people an idea of where they're going. If the show is at a house or location that isn't posted publicly, you can always add the classic "ask a punk." If it's a squatted or illicit event, put the instructions for how people can find out where the show is day-of.

Don't tell people to DM an Instagram handle for the location c'mon.

3) Bands: Include not only the names of all the bands playing, but also where they're from (for touring bands) and some kind of description. You can get indulgent and write a full sentence describing the band, but it probably shouldn't be that long. Just a few genre descriptors or a "members of" or "FFO" (for fans of). You and maybe some of your crew will already know these out of town bands (you are booking their show, after all), but many local punks will have never heard of them, no matter how hype you think they are! Give people something to let them know what to expect and you are more likely to get a better turnout, and more people checking out the touring bands. Even if it's a bit silly or ironic, some kind of description will give people on the fence a reason to come to the gig. If you're insecure about your ability to describe bands or clock genres, just ask the bands how they'd describe their music or look on their website or bandcamp page.

4) Time: include a door time and a show time, or if you only advertise one time, make sure it's clear whether it's when the doors will be open or when the music is starting. If people don't know when things are happening, they are gonna be pissed that they missed their friend's band, or annoyed that they have to stand around for 3 hours waiting for the music to start because you have to delay the show waiting for people to show up. Time on this earth is precious and limited. People have kids, jobs, and other things going on in their lives. If your show is running on clearly advertised times, more people with busy lives will be able to show up!

5) Price: How much does the show cost to attend? Is there a sliding scale? Is it PWYC (Pay What You Can) or NOTAFLOF (No One Turned Away For Lack Of Funds)? Is the show a benefit for something? Are there advance tickets?

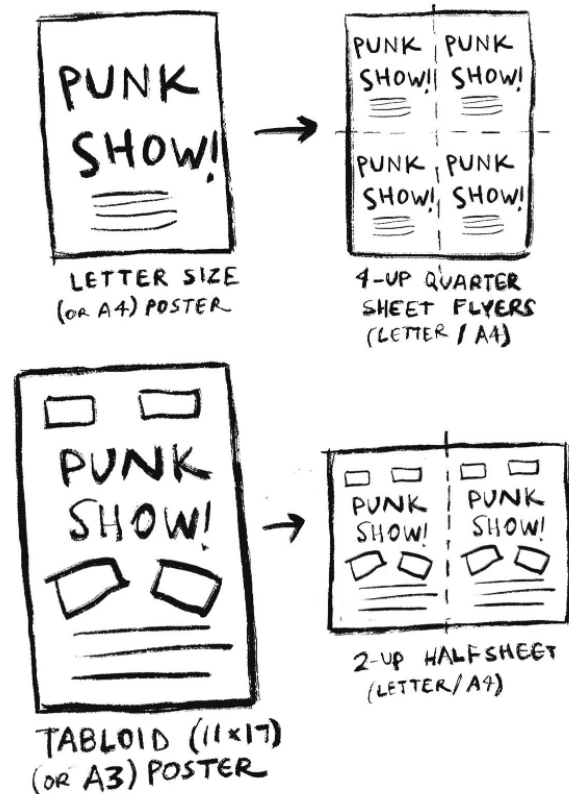
6) Age limits + consumption info: Is the show all ages? (it should be!) 18+ or 21+? Do attendees need to bring ID if they want to drink?

7) How to learn more: Include info for a website, hotline, forum, or whatever else exists in your town where people can get more info about the show, find links to check out the bands, or find updates if anything changes. e.g. "yourtown.askapunk.net". Remember that people who don't have Instagram or Facebook (aka real punks) cannot usually access the info without an account, so keep that in mind when including links or handles. If those are the only options in your town, try to do something about it!

Another note on art and design when it comes to show posters: the poster should be legible. Cool punk art is cool, but sometimes the show information can get lost in the art forest. A poster with really cool huge art and really tiny illegible information in a weird hard-to-read hand drawn font will probably look cool, but it won't help anyone new get to your show.

TURNING A POSTER INTO HANDBILLS

Here's a little visual cheat sheet for shrinking down your poster to print as handbills:



If your original poster is Letter (8 1/2" x 11" aka regular ol' printer paper) or A4 (regular printer paper outside North America), OR if the digital version you're working with is roughly 4:5 ratio, you can fit 4 mini flyers/handbills onto one sheet.

If your original poster is a larger Tabloid (11" x 17"), you can comfortably fit two side-by-side on Letter/A4/Printer paper. You could print them smaller but unless the info on the original poster is huge and legible, you might not be able to read it well (and

into a zine. If you've done something for a local zine that you think would benefit from a wider audience, send it to us and we'll publish it too!

That's it. If you want to contribute something, do it! Check the contact page (it's always the last page of the zine).

—Martin Force



THE LIMITS (pt. 1)

I've been taking a lot more walks lately, dropping off newsletters in the little libraries. Punishment by proxy! A great big fakeout! Congrats, you have in your hands what looks like a punk zine but is actually 6–10 pgs of RFK's Exhibit A when it's time for my Tismternment at the Barron Trump Wellness Camp. Nerds, sloths, masturbators, they're coming for you and me alike so I'll see you on the chain gang for another 12hr shift spent smashing Kristi Noem's dog's head in for tinkling outside of designated tinkle time.

Walking, yes. Talking to myself? Maybe. Leave the house, buy thing, eat drink or play with thing. The headphones are on and it's FLOW-ER POWER or PARKING or FU-SCHNICKENS or C. Did you hear ever this band? Japanese band that took a chance on a letter that wasn't X, wrote an album called "Dear Fuckin' Shit All The Fascists +2" and if that doesn't make it move then it's no wonder RFK's coming for the punks last: you're their greatest warrior. 9 songs bop bop bopping on the bass and stacc stacc staccato on the drums, Steve Ignorant and Pete Wright jamming with D and Mike Watt. Fucking corn dogs, but not for the cat, and on the walks continues.

Last week, the walks included Nevada, fresh from their 10th tour just this year, out and about with HIRS or BLACK EYES and lord willing they'll regale us with those many torrid tales in these here pages soon-like. They were here for 9 days cut down from 10 and I saw them about half, rounded up for soup, chai, matcha, pastry, tacos. I like my quiet walks of solemn contemplation as much as the next red-blood american male, but it was nice to have a

companion during daytime hours with whom I waxed nimrodian.

B_____, my neighbor, was out tending the garden during the one most recent. He plays picture pages on the same sets I shepherd, shifting chairs for 12 hrs and moving coffee cups lest we break the immersion when one pretty person screams at another, or professes their love, or pantomimes real good for Post. I'm certainly losing my lust for the whole ordeal, though not for eating or shelter, and it seems he's not far off what with all the garden tending, but my walks and the trimming and the snip snip snip of the sheers has afforded us enough time for the small talk to grow big before our very eyes. "Oh how's the dog?" "Fine, and how's the leg?" and now we're talking about our parents and planning potlucks and parting with a friendly embrace.

At the end, again most recent, check my messages, one from justa, lowercase, always. Older guy I know from the depths of the dead ccg underground. Creative, prolific, maybe somewhat lonely. His family lives closer to me than he now, or so I'm told. Won't speak up in the group chat, but always sends me reassurances and advice and confides to me directly. He told me recently he didn't feel qualified to speak on such and such topic and I responded, like I often do to Jeeny, that I believe in some circumstances that makes you even more qualified. I told him I wished I could give him a great big hug. Selflessness is selfish, I think I need one, too.

Everything feels... Feet go slow, muscles weighed down, air feels thick, distended, pregnant. I walk and walk and the concrete's uneven, shifting with every step as the earth beneath reaches a rolling boil. The sirens go off and you wonder who is it this time and the choppers overhead and you wonder if its passengers are the cause of all this or are they just passing by, observing. I walk and I trip and the concrete is bubbling and covered in bird shit and black black black gum and my legs are tired and the door is locked and I forgot the keys and I climb through the window and see the ants have breached the cracks in our walls and our floors and I collapse into bed and contemplate the absolute limits of everything. (End pt. 1)

—Ralph Rivera



I WILL DO MY WORST #4

How-to Contribute to The Counterforce

The Counterforce is a distributed and community project! Through 11 issues and 280+ posts, we've been lucky enough to have contributors from all over the world: many are friends, many are strangers, and some were strangers and are now friends. But we can always use more contributors! I don't particularly like writing, and I didn't start this to have a place to publish my own writing. I would really much prefer to just do the shit-work and provide a platform for punks from all over to share and connect, replacing algorithmic recommendation with curation and community.

In that pursuit, I am often shaking down my friends and acquaintances to contribute something to The Counterforce, so this issue's column is going to be the little encouraging pep talk I usually give.

First, ideas on what to contribute:

Review a new release you are excited about. It can be your friend's band. It can be a record that you think everyone already knows about, or a record you think no one knows about.

Interview a band. Cold call a band you like, interview a band passing through on tour, or just interview a local band you are friends with.

Write a **scene report**. What's up in your local scene? What local bands are playing, what new releases are coming out, where do shows happen, how is the punk community engaging with local (or global) politics?

Do you know how to do something useful for punks? A bit of a DIY-type? Write a **how-to**.

Send a **letter** to The Counterforce for publication. This could be anything: a short idea, something you want other punks to read, a reaction to something you read in The

Counterforce (positive or negative), an idea, a dream. Be creative.

Second, how to rip-off the band-aid:

Start small. Don't just get stuck on trying to decide on the "perfect first contribution". Just start with something small and easy, like a review. Spend ten minutes re-listening to a demo and just write a paragraph like you are selling it to a friend. If 50 people sent in just one review every other month, the website and each zine would be packed.

Similarly, an interview can be as simple as four questions: "1. Who is in the band and how did the band start? 2. What's the best show you've played and what was so good about it? 3. What releases/tours/shows do you have coming up? 4. What else is going on in your local scene you want to talk about/shout out?" Easy!!!

Don't overthink it. First thought = best thought. This isn't a newspaper, it doesn't have to be perfect. It's a punk zine. The bar for writing is, and should be, low. And we'll edit it for you to make sure what you are saying is clear and that your article matches the in-house style guide.

If you feel intimidated... you can use a punk name! We will protect your true identity.

You can contribute in the best way that works for you. Send it by e-mail, leave a voicemail, sent a text or message on Signal, or send a letter in the mail.

More tips:

Read past issues/stuff on the website and make sure you read the manifesto. Basically any contribution that fits under the broad umbrella of hardcore punk underground and is aligned with the manifesto is welcome. So remember, we want to highlight punk stuff happening outside of or in opposition to corporate social media and streaming platforms. No Instagram handles!

Try to include at least one photo or image. It could be a live band photo, a flyer, whatever.

This isn't some exclusive publishing house. If you have a blog where you post reviews, you can submit your reviews here too. You can do a column, and then collect all your columns

if you're on North American paper sizes there'll be a little extra space on the sides cause it's not the right height-to-width ratio — this is not a problem with A3, A4, etc sizes). If you want to print quarter-sized handbills of a larger poster like this, you might want to ask the artist to do a separate version that's optimized for the smaller size.

There's a few ways to "n-up" your posters (print multiple sheets on one page e.g. 4-up, 2-up, etc).

- **Digitally:** Maybe you have access to or know how to use design software like Photoshop (evil, expensive), GIMP (cool, free and open source) or something else like Affinity. If that's the case, you can shrink your design by a little more than 50% and then copy-paste until you fill your page like the examples above. BTW, in most cases you will want to save it as a PDF for easy printing.
- **Analog:** If you are using a photocopier or printer with a flat bed scanner, lay down your original and find the option to reduce the output size by 50%. Print four copies of this. Cut out each of the small flyers and use a gluestick or tape to lay them out 4-up on a new piece of paper, and photocopy away.
- **Pro tip:** whichever method you use, leave a little extra space around the edges and between flyers to give you some wiggle room for cutting and print margins. Always print and cut a test copy before you run 100 copies.
- **Pro tip 2:** print a different show flyer (or some other message you want to get out) on the back side and it's a 2-for-1 special.

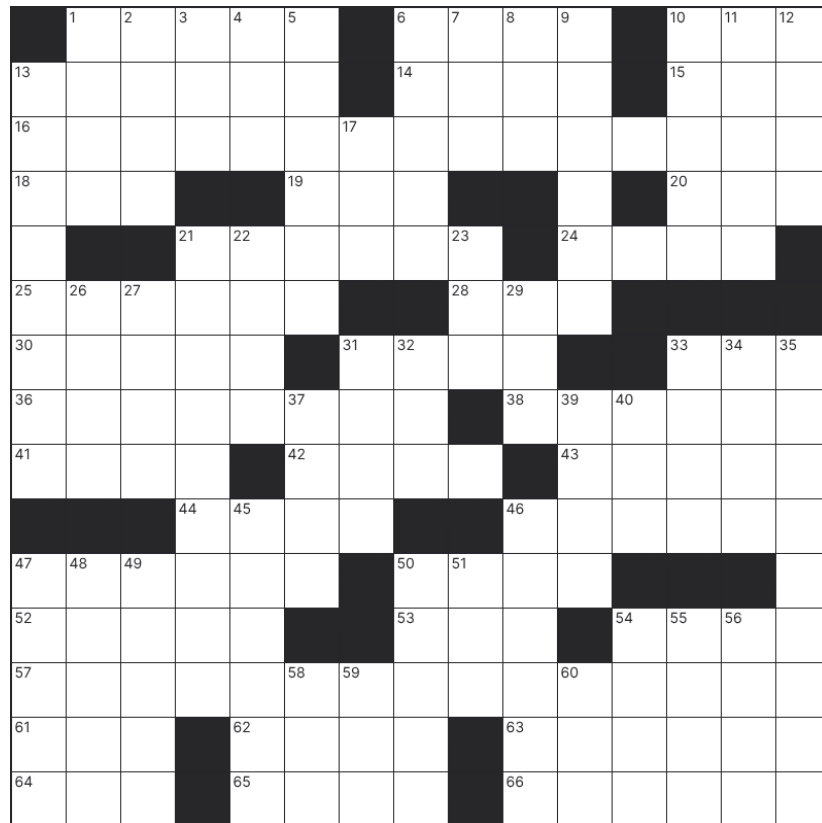
Don't make your show flyer 1:1 ratio (perfectly square). It's useless for everything except Instagram (including most other digital applications) and it's hard to print either full size or 4-up without wasting paper.

PROMOTING YOUR SHOW!

- Go to shows and stand near the door as the last band finishes playing and personally hand a flyer to everyone leaving the show. This is especially important if there is overlapping interest/demographics, e.g. if your show is all ages (it should be), make sure you get to other all ages gigs to hand out flyers!
- Keep flyers in your bag and try to remember to hand them out if you run into people you know, or give those people a few extra to hand out.
- Put up posters around town! Get into wheatpasting, or go around to record stores, bars/coffeeshops, community sign boards, etc. If your show is all ages (it should be) put up posters around high schools, youth centres, loitering spots and universities.
- Don't forget to send the info about your show to any local DIY show listing websites/blogs or print newsletters so people off social media can get the scoop.
- Got leftover handbills after a gig? Bring them to your jamspace or throw them in your gig bag, they're great for setlists. 📄

The Counterforce Crossword #2

by Crash JT



ACROSS

1. Oi fanatics against white power, abbr.
6. Scooter-riding youth of the 60s, disdained by skins.
10. Grassroots union with a red logo and cat
13. Real name: Douglas Colvin
14. Sum, short form?
15. The sound of one befuddled
16. A no scratches, no wear, record
18. 1960s radical student activist org.
19. Investment yield, short form
20. End of the name for playwright Oscar
21. Philly's sandwich
24. Former Breitbart editor, target of 2017 Berkeley protests.
25. Snitch on
28. The 1990s predecessors to 46D, abbr.
30. What happens when protests escalate
31. Croft of Tomb Raider

33. Resting place?
36. Traditionally female shaved-head haircuts
38. Jerk (in Britain).
41. Italian "they"
42. Main actor in Trainspotting
43. DISCLOSE, "_____ not music!"
44. What you may use to slick back your hair
46. Made amends
47. An equal number of
50. THE MAD ARE _____
52. Argot
53. Salon service
54. Place to eat
57. External troublemaker, allegedly
61. Employ
62. Rookie, according to your 12 year old cousin
63. "Speed it up!"
64. Left-hand side, briefly
65. Hosp. workers
66. "_____ target"

DOWN

1. Dispatch
2. Fashion lines?
3. A nickname for Addison
4. Stimp's Pal
5. An oogle's squeaking companion?
6. New Zealand Native
7. Warning, of sorts
8. Fantasy role-playing game, for short.
9. Reputation harmer
10. CRASS, "Yes sir, _____"
11. "Just _____ you think you are?!"
12. Lessen
13. Shame
17. "Fuck capitalism! We are all just a _____ in the machine!"
21. Rowdy football fanatics
22. Baseball stats
23. Stud site

26. Nirvana achievers
27. Cliche Father's day gift.
29. A type of punk, or Sashimi?
31. 1985 comp, "We Don't Want your Fucking _____!"
32. King of Judah
33. The theme of this puzzle!
34. Lab wire
35. Fashion brand with a laurel wreath logo and iconic polos.
37. Slippery
39. Poker stake
40. Exaggerated 'never!
45. It purrs when it's cared for
46. Right-wing pundit's favorite boogeyman
47. REPLACEMENTS, "Don't tell _____"
48. Blizzard aftermath
49. Blokes
50. Picket-line crossers
51. Summer mo.
54. What you put an instrument in
55. "_____ boy!"
56. 6A vs 33D, e.g.?
58. A sub's counterpart
59. "End of Today" abbr.
60. Earth tone

Solution for last issue's Puzzle (#1):

